How Do We Know Whether Development Programs Contribute to Stabilization?

Evaluating Multiple Programs
in Afghanistan, Philippines, and Southern Sudan

U.S. Department of State Fourth Annual Conference on Program Evaluation
June 7-8, 2011
George C. Marshall Center

The "Whole-of-Government Evaluation Puzzle"

- In conflict-affected countries, a <u>multi-sector combination</u> of socio-economic development, governance, political, and security programs are needed to achieve stabilization and durable peace ("whole of government", "3-Ds", "integrated strategies", "security-development nexus", "QDDR")
- To provide this mix, <u>multiple</u> agencies, governments, multilateral organizations, and NGOs must <u>work together</u>
- But the "whole of government" approach <u>cannot</u> mean doing any and all programs, everywhere, anytime
- How can we tell which <u>assortment of differing development programs</u> are effective in mitigating conflicts and increasing stability? how? when? in what sequence? in which conflict/stabilization situations?

Solving this Puzzle Involves Three Tasks

1. Defining <u>holistic evaluative criteria</u> to measure multiple programs' overall progress in conflict mitigation or stabilization "writ large"

2. Collecting <u>holistic data</u> to assess results

3. Analyzing <u>overall results</u> so findings can inform multiple decision-makers' choices

In conflict-affected and fragile states, these tasks face special constraints and difficulties

We Present Here:

- How 3 multi-program evaluations in conflict zones of Philippines, Sudan and Afghanistan tackled these challenges

- Selected findings from the evaluations

- Implications for policy and practice

A. Evaluation of the USAID assistance portfolio in Mindanao (southern Philippines), 2008*

Focus: Were the USAID's infrastructure, education, health, governance, environment, and conflict resolution programs reducing the sources of the MILF insurgency, Islamist Abu Sayyef influence, clan conflicts, and community disputes?

Conflict situation: Sporadic clashes among differing parties at several levels

*Conducted by MSI
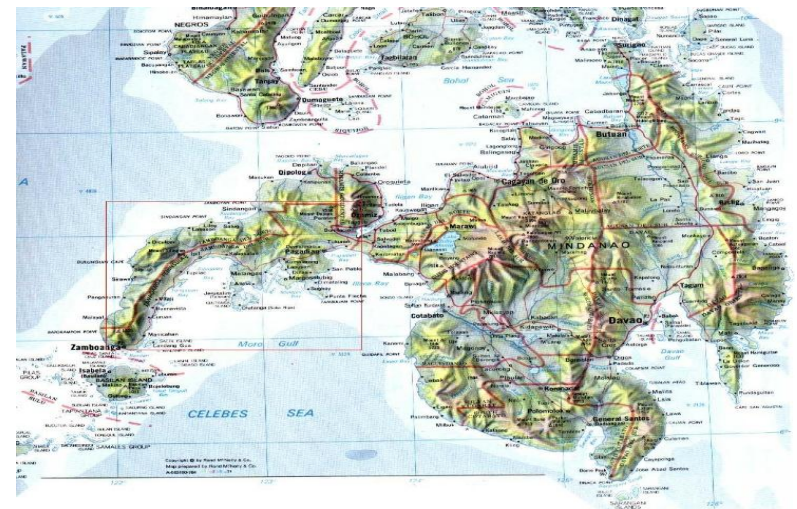
B. Multi-Donor Evaluation of Southern Sudan, 2010*

Focus: Have all major donors' various programs helped to consolidate peace since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005?

Conflict situation: post-north-south civil war, pastoralist conflicts, LRA attacks

*One of the presenters was one of five
multi-national team leaders
in this evaluation, which was conducted by ITAD
in the UK and Channel Research in Brussels
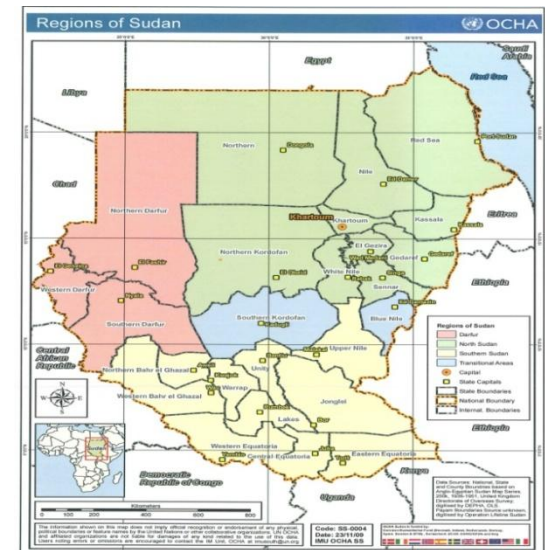
Task 1:
Defining holistic evaluative criteria to measure multiple programs' progress in conflict mitigation and stabilization

- Identify the societal, institutional/political, and security conditions that would reflect overall progress toward lasting peace/stability

- Define indicators of these possible outcomes and impacts

Evaluative Criteria in Mindanao and Sudan

Criteria derived from drivers of the conflicts, as identified by conflict assessments done in both settings.

- The assessments identified underlying/socio-economic, institutional, mobilizing, and immediate factors driving the conflicts, and existing capacities for peace
- The criteria were grouped under the categories in OECD's Peacebuilding Evaluation framework: relevance, effectiveness, impact, linkages
- Examples: reduction of pastoralist raids, creation of operative judicial procedures for local land disputes

Task 2:
Collecting holistic data on results

<u>Mindanao and Sudan data tools</u>

- Administrative data, existing program evaluations, focus groups/interviews by multi-national teams
- Mindanao also used household survey through local firm to gain linguistic and cultural access. Questions geared to programs' possible impacts

<u>Setting baselines</u>

- Mindanao: "baseline" imputed by asking how conditions at present (2008) compare to turn of millenium: e.g., "Have your employment opportunities increased since 2000?"
- Sudan: Compared impacts in relation to conflict assessments done in 2005 and 2010

Task 3.
Analyzing overall results so they inform multiple decisionmakers' strategies

Methods of analysis

For relevance: Matched overall balances in the program priorities against the conflict drivers

For effectiveness (outcomes): Examined designs of selected programs for "conflict sensitivity"

For impacts: Asked informants about perceived impacts. Reviewed Mindanao survey results for households' attitude/perceptions of local changes

Touchstone for Evaluating Impacts: Implicit Theories of Change

- Donors in both settings had overall "theories of change":

- <u>Mindanao</u>: Expanding the diverse aid programs in the Muslim "conflict-affected" areas of Mindanao will reduce drivers of conflicts
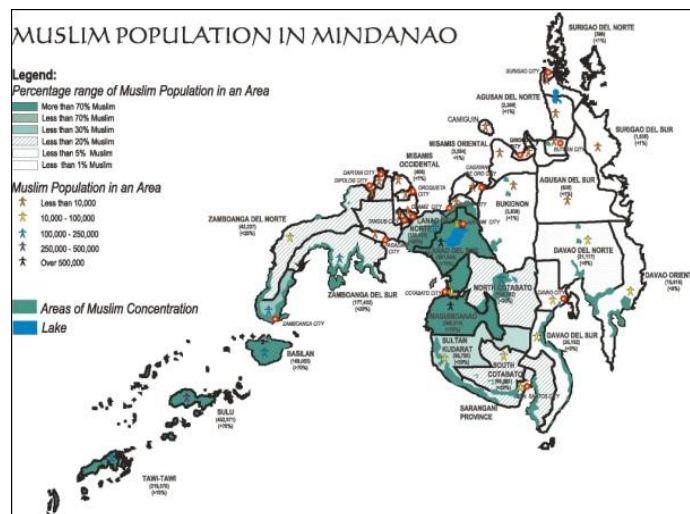
Mindanao Findings

- Muslims noticed more special attention to their particular needs, improved standard of living, opportunities
- Little attention to institutions/political processes:
  - A few initiatives addressed revenge violence (rido) and local environmental disputes
  - Governance in Muslim ARMM not prioritized -- programs were general-purpose, technocratic
  - Little emphasis on community participatory processes
- Neglect of immediate sources of clan, election violence, such as providing police support
- Continued sporadic insurgent clashes

Why these results?

Theory of change prioritized underlying "root" socio-economic sources of conflict

Budget Allocations to Various Drivers of Conflict in Mindanao

Underlying Conditions

Factors That Mobilize Violence

Peace Capacities

Immediate Triggers
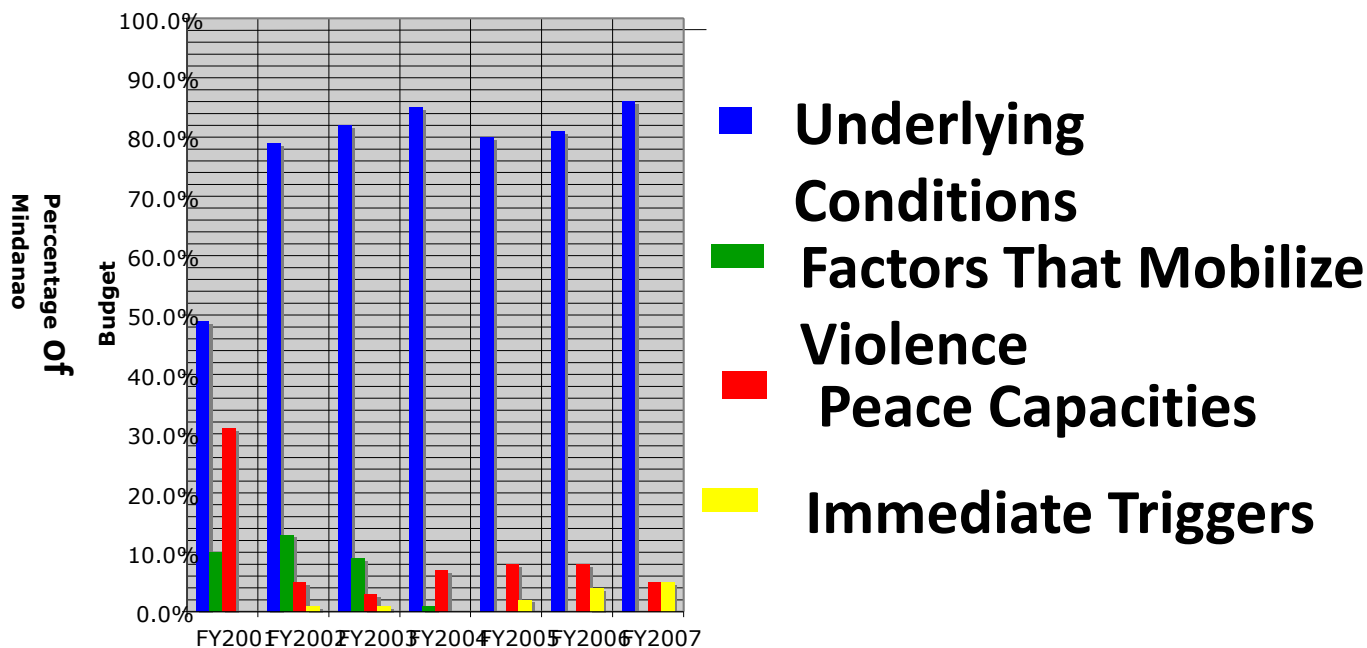
Southern Sudan Theory of Change

- Quick development will provide "peace dividend" to general population that supplants drivers of conflicts

- Pooled funds will encourage an integrated strategy

- Prioritizing "state-building" will instill confidence in the south's new government

Sudan Findings:
"Development and statebuilding before peace"

- New roads boosted commerce, optimism
- Ambitious institution-building in <u>Juba</u>
- But statebuilding and legal reform was top-down and slow. So material improvements did not reach local level
- Local humanitarian services languished
- Pastoral conflicts not prioritized. LRA raids not deterred
- Prolonged population displacements discouraged economic renewal

C. Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Program (HMEP), Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2010-present*

Focus: What are impacts on stabilization of donor and ISAF development, governance, and security efforts in DFID PRTs?
Conflict situation: Taliban insurgency

*Designed and implemented by MSI/Coffey

Task 1.
Defining holistic evaluative criteria for outcomes and impacts

<u>HMEP</u>

"Helmand Plan" defined overall goals, based on COIN stabilization theory of change: "clear, hold, build"

- A model linked interventions' rationales and activities to desired outcomes and impacts

- Through prism of campaign goals; nine sectors: (e.g., agriculture, education, governance, growth, health, infrastructure, rule of law) and 10 districts

- Examples: access to government-run health centers, confidence in police, extent of traffic on roads

Task 2:
Collecting holistic data

HMEP Data tools
- Secondary data: administrative data of government/donors/military, secondary sources
- Primary data: household survey for public perceptions, focus groups, key informant interviews, done by local partner
- Primary data: geo-spatial patterns through GIS

Baseline & progress review
- Partial baselines for Helmand Plan elements
- Quarterly all-source reviews combine administrative data, measures of public activity & perceptions

Task 3.
Analyzing overall results so they inform multiple decisionmakers' choices

HMEP <u>methods</u> enable evidence-based discussions of causality and weighing relative contributions:

- Statistical correlations and regression analysis identify relationships among impacts

- Geospatial analysis enables correlations between developmental progress & perceptions of government versus insurgents

- User-friendly website and interactive database provide common evaluation platform for multiple decisionmakers

Example:
Correlation between school sites and perceptions of district government legitimacy
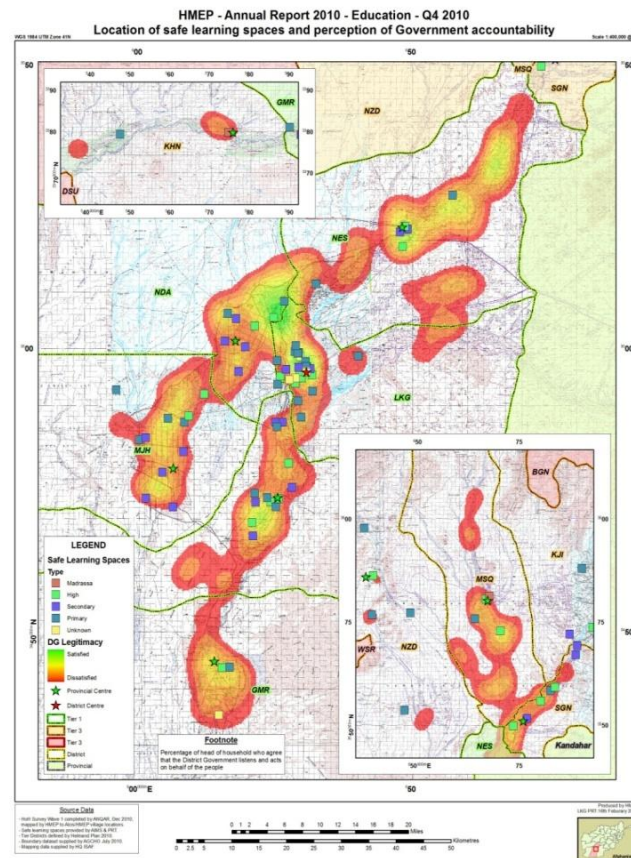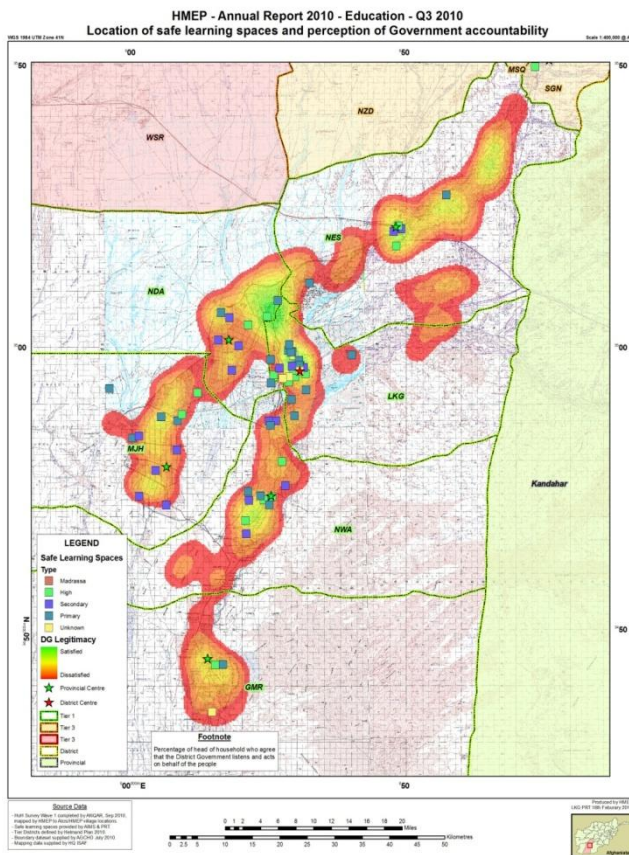
HMEP Findings

COIN theory of change says development increases population's support of government; decreases it for insurgency.

- **Socio-Economic Development** – Positive relationships between income; beliefs in economic growth; access to healthcare *and* perceptions of government legitimacy. And between perceived improvements in roads *and* government legitimacy.

- **Governance --** Strong correlations between increased access to information, contact with the District Governor, *and* perceptions of government legitimacy.

However…

Rule of Law

- <u>No</u> significant link between tashkiel fill *and* public perceptions of the police or willingness to use them.

- <u>No</u> significant correlation *either way* between respondents' confidence in state courts *and* trust in Taliban justice.

Engaging multiple decisionmakers in using the findings

Findings/analysis are made available to decision-makers in separate organizations to improve joint strategy:

- Website, database, GIS, capacity building as communication tools
- Combined civil-military reporting; 2-3 day key stakeholder workshop
- Quarterly reports, analytical paper
- Briefings for wider Kabul-based donors and ministries

Some Helmand Lessons

- Development and services cannot substitute for providing physical security, but can consolidate security gains and boost legitimacy of government when moved in rapidly to "hold"

- Development/services need to be inclusive politically, capable, and accountable. Poor quality, partial services, "quick projects", can undermine public confidence, invite insurgent return, or feed corruption and political inequities through capture by exclusionary patronage networks

- Despite the tendency of agency-driven implementation, a robust cross-agency evaluation platform increases incentive for evidence-based testing of overall strategies

Implications of the 3 Evaluations for policy and practice

- Frequent analyses of conflict and political economy are key to targeting programs on various socio-economic, political/institutional, as well as the kinetic drivers of conflicts, and distinguishing differing forms/dynamics of conflicts

- Providing for socio-economic needs insufficient for reducing conflicts. Security, services and governance need to pre-empt the key political actors that mobilize conflicts, differentiate among areas and target populations

- Building local participatory processes can buttress stability by investing the population in selecting, monitoring services and governance

Contact Information

Michael Lund
mslund@verizon.net
202-966-4265

Andrew Rathmell
Andrew_Rathmell@coffey.com
+44 20 7034 7574
www.msiworldwide.com;
www.coffey.com

Task 1. Defining holistic evaluative criteria to measure multiple programs' progress in conflict mitigation and stabilization "writ large"

Special challenges in conflict-affected and fragile states:

- Differing sectoral goals and discrete programs, stove-piped implementation

- Differing performance criteria, time horizons, professional and organizational cultures – e.g., political versus universal bases for distribution

- Strategic priorities may shift often

Task 2. Collecting holistic data on results

Special challenges:*

- Valid data are lacking; no baselines

- Insecure environment makes collecting primary data risky; difficult to travel

- Cultural hierarchies and contending political agendas skew opinions of "general public"

*cf. MSI, <u>M&E in Post-Conflict Settings</u>

Task 3. Analyzing the overall results so the findings can inform multiple decisionmakers' strategies

Special challenges:

- Volatile, kinetic forces mean programs often fail, evaluative conclusions are short-lived

- Separate reporting silos

- Frequent staff turnover reduces institutional memory

- Shifting strategic priorities require frequent and ongoing feedback

- Pressure from "home" political level to show "successes" that allow exit ASAP